9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

wanderings, especially in the country districts, the visitor will likewise notice, let into the external walls of churches, small marble slabs bearing the inscription:

346
692
778

NON GODE
L'IMMUNITÀ
ECCLESIASTICA

The tablets meant that the churches and chapels in question did not enjoy the right of ecclesiastical sanctuary, and their explanation lay in the fact that until well after the beginning of the nineteenth century the Ecclesiastical Courts in Malta exercised temporal jurisdiction over the clergy. It followed that their jurisdiction extended over all consecrated buildings, in which the civil authority was unable to exercise its functions.

778
346
692
656

The next stage was reached when lay criminals sought refuge in these "extra-territorial" churches from the arm of the civil law. When the abuse tended to become serious the ecclesiastical authorities sought to minimize it by affixing the notice in question to various rural churches with the object of confining the right of sanctuary to the churches on which the inscription did not appear. But the right, even thus restricted, had clearly become an anachronism dangerous to the peace and good order of the country, and no longer tolerable. So in 1828 it was completely abolished by Governor Ponsonby by means of a Proclamation, whose preamble declares that:

> In consequence of certain privileges or immunities heretofore claimed as belonging to divers churches and other holy edifices and places in these islands, wicked and profligate men have often been tempted to commit murders, robberies and other atrocious crimes in the hope of escaping punishment by taking refuge in such places.